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Space is too limited to allow going into further details of the question of law and social order.[16] It suffices to say that villagers know very little about law and yet they seldom commit crime. The backbone of the social order of P'ing-chiao-tsun is customary sanction and not laws promulgated by governments. While the family is a very important unit in the process of ordering and control, public opinions in the form of gossips among villagers are too strong for any one to neglect.

Sacred Order

The maintenance of a social order in P'ing-chiao-tsun depends upon forces which extend beyond the secular into the sacred. There is no greater disturbance in normal life aside from military attacks than what is called by the social anthropologists the "life crises" such as birth, marriage and death. In addition to these life crises, the uncertainty of agricultural production due to "water and wind" should be also mentioned. Both life crises and agricultural crises may disturb any existing equilibrium in the social structure, and some means must be provided to have it re-established. When all secular means fail man, he has to appeal to the mystic powers in the unseen world. He has to rescue life from death; so he has to depend on religion.[17]

The birth of a child is called a happy event. But mortality is high. Parents are busy with other businesses of life and their knowledge of child care is limited. Anxiety over the security of an infant, under such circumstances, is very high indeed. Here, religion comes to the rescue. Many ceremonies of a magico-religious nature are performed in certain intervals such as three days, one hundred days and one year after birth to assure the child's life. When even these magico-religious performances fail, it is the fate of man and not the failure of gods.

Marriage is also a happy event, but the newcomer may be a trouble-maker, and the union may not be approved by gods and ancestral spirits. Performances of a magico-religious nature are made before, during and after wedding. As mentioned previously, the

16 A paper on law and social order in P'ing-chiao-tsun is in preparation.

17 Bronislaw Malinowski, "Magic Science and Religion", in Science Religion and Reality, edited by Joseph Needham, New York, 1925, pp. 19-84; A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, The Andaman Islanders, A Study in Social Anthropology, Cambridge University Press, 1922.

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hold gods, the kitchen god is the most popular. Every family has it and every family worships it at certain days of the year. On the twenty-third of the last moon of the lunar calendar, the family has to make presents to the kitchen god so that he may make a good report to the supreme god in heaven.

The most popular magico-religious ritual in P'ing-chiao-tsun according to one of our religious investigations is the one performed to the "four sacred families" or the spirits of weasels 黃鼠狼, foxes 狐狸, snakes 蛇 and hedgehogs 刺猬. A small house of two to three feet high, three to four feet long and one to two feet wide in the neighborhood of a family residence is built for the spirits of these four animals.

These spirits, evil and good, are believed to wander in the village. They cannot be hurt or disturbed. Sometimes one or several of these spirits may be in possession of a person, usually a woman. The spirits can speak through the mouth of the individual in their possession. Under such circumstances, a house may be built to please these spirits. Sometimes, these spirits may require the service of the individual in their possession to be their permanent intermediary and such an individual may cure illness in the name of one or several of these spirits.[18]

From all we know, religious worship is a family matter. Under certain circumstances such as birth, marriage and death, relatives and friends may participate in the performance. Thus the comfort that one receives from magico-religious performance is not only psychological but social. When one is in a state of emotional unbalance in a life crisis, he has his friends and relatives to pray with him and for him. The fellowship as well as the worship thus render him a moral assistance to raise him to victory out of desperation and death.

Change and Continuity

P'ing-chiao-tsun folks feel the pressure from outside to change, but they appreciate conservatism more than novelty. They look backward more than forward. If continuity and creativity are the two aspects of the process of culture, the first is more obvious in P'ing-chiao-tsun than the second. The social structure has been stationary

18 A paper on the "four sacred families" is in preparation.